KEMPSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
For the Year 1897.

Gentlemen,—I beg to lay before you my report for the year 1897.

Population of the District.—The population of the district is estimated at 4,000.

Birth Rate.—The births registered for the year number 132, giving a birth-rate of 33 per 1,000.

Death Rate.—The deaths registered for the year number 53, giving a death-rate of 13·25 per 1,000.

Infant Mortality.—The deaths of infants under one year have been 21, being at the rate of 5·27 per 1,000, or 39·6 per cent. of the entire returns, and equal to a proportion of 159 per 1,000 births.

Mortality of Childhood.—The deaths of children under five number 5, being 9·4 per cent. of the entire returns.

Mortality of Advanced Ages.—The mortality of 65 and upwards stands at 11, being 20·7 per cent. of the entire returns.

Deaths from Phthisis.—One per 1,000.

Deaths from Respiratory Diseases.—2·7 per 1,000 11 deaths came under this heading, eight of these in children under 5.

Zymotic Diseases.—Eight diseases were registered, equal to a death-rate of 2 per 1,000. This somewhat high rate is due to the epidemic of whooping cough.

Whooping Cough.—This disease, which was somewhat prevalent in December, 1896, continued to prevail in January and February. Four deaths occurred. It was deemed advisable to exclude the children from affected families from the various schools in the district.

Diarrhœa.—Three deaths are registered as occurring from this disease; all in children under 5.

Puerperal Fever.—One death occurred from this disease.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT.

In my last year's report I mentioned that the above Act had been in force since the Council came into power. I am informed by the Clerk that the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act also came into force at the same time. Twelve certificates have been received.

Scarlatina	4
Diphtheria	1
Typhoid Fever	2
Puerperal Fever	2
Erysipelas	3

Of the two cases of typhoid, one was removed from Bedford to her home in Kempston. The other occurred in the district, and was removed to Bedford Infirmary Fever Hospital. Careful inquiries were made as to the possible cause of this case. The well water was subjected to a quantitive as well as a bacteriological examination, with negative results. This case occurred in September. No further case has occurred.

Beyond the case of typhoid mentioned, all the other cases were treated at their own homes.

No isolation hospital is as yet available for the district. The closing of the Fever Hospital at the Bedford Infirmary has left the district entirely without a house of refuge in the event of an epidemic outbreak.

This is not a comfortable state of matters, and I should recommend that the Council consider at an early date the steps to be taken should isolation be promptly required. I understand the Council hope to make arrangements for hospital accommodation with the Bedford Rural Authority, as soon as their project has assumed definite form.

DRAINAGE AND WATER SUPPLY.

The system of scavenging is being most energetically carried out, and has effected a vast improvement in the sanitary condition of the district.

I am sorry I am unable to report as favourably on the water supply.

The supply is still drawn from the sources mentioned in my last year's report. Samples taken at random have been subjected to a quantitive analysis, with the result that some of the wells are found to be contaminated and have been pronounced "unfit for domestic purposes."

From my knowledge of the district, I think I may fairly infer that there are other wells the water of which if analysed would produce similar unfavourable reports. At all events, we are now aware that some of the wells are contaminated. Such knowledge should at once suggest that early consideration should be given to the improvement of the water supply. On the other hand, I may state that I am no advocate for a common water supply, providing a good, what might be termed individual, supply is obtainable. An epidemic, such as typhoid fever, would be much easier controlled in a district where the water supply for three or four families is derived from one source, compared with a district where one common source supplies the whole population. In the meantime, I would recommend that all water used for drinking purposes should first be boiled.

Vaccination.—The Vaccination Act is almost a dead letter in the district. As a Medical Officer of Health whose duty it is to advise the Council in matters pertaining to public health, I feel that I would be remiss in my duties were I not to point out the above fact, and recommend that the Board of Guardians be approached with the view of having the Act enforced.

General and House Sanitation.—Mr. Foster, Sanitary Inspector, has handed me the accompanying returns.

The district is still under my daily supervision. Bye-laws in connexion with new streets and buildings are being rigidly enforced.

A system of surface drainage is now in progress, which will remedy the defect mentioned in my last year's report as to the dampness of some of the dwellings. No case of over-crowding has been reported; one house has been closed as unfit for habitation.

In conclusion, the death-rate, 13·25 per 1,000, may not be the lowest in the county, but consideration must be given to the fact that Kempston Urban District has one of the highest birth-rates in the county. Noting this, one may expect the infantile mortality to be correspondingly high. This is evidenced by the fact that of the deaths registered during the first quarter of the year nine of the 15 deaths recorded occurred in children of one year and under; all, with one exception, from whooping-cough and respiratory diseases.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
GEO. BUTTERS, M.B., C.M.,
Medical Officer of Health.

Kempston, Feb. 28, 1898.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1897.

Return of nuisances and other matters for the year ending December 31, 1897:—

Houses without a proper receptacle to privy, or having a defective closet	28
Wells requiring cleansing and repairing	10
Defective cesspools	8
Defective drains	21
Premises in a dirty state.....	2
Spouting required to buildings	1
Defective ashpits	2
Disinfectants supplied.....	6
Accumulations of offensive matters	4
Sundry requirements, such as new gulley tops, &c....	3
Total	85
Total last year	76
Bakehouses inspected	8
Slaughter houses	6

REMARKS.

The bakehouses and slaughter houses in the district have been inspected every six months and cleanliness insured. Laundries are also inspected.

Two scavengers are regularly employed by the Council and have done good work during the past year. The weekly average of closet pails emptied during the last month of the year was 506 as against 340 of last year. Several pails are now emptied *twice* weekly. The men also remove the contents of ashpits and cesspools, but a considerable amount of hired labour has been employed to help with the work of these latter. The Council have entertained the desirability of employing two more men regularly in the place of the hired labour, but it appeared that there would not be sufficient work to keep them continually employed. The average cost per pail, for removing the contents once a week by the Council's men, works out at 1·08d. each, which I consider very low, and it includes hire of stables, depreciation of stock, &c. The cost for each ashpit emptied is 1s. 4d., and for each cesspool 3s. 6d.; the cost per each with cesspools is rather more with hired labour. I am pleased to say that owners have fallen in with my recommendations, and several of the old style privies have been done away with and galvanised pails substituted.

LEONARD FOSTER,
Sanitary Inspector.

A.

TABLE OF DEATHS during the Year 1897, *in the Kempston Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages and Localities.*

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these statistics; Public Institutions being shown as separate localities. (*Columns for Populations and Births are in Table B.*) (a)	Mortality from all causes, at subjoined ages. At all ages. (b)	Under 1 Year. (c)	1 and under 5. (d)	5 and under 15. (e)	15 and under 25. (f)	25 and under 65. (g)	65 and upwards. (h)	(i)	Mortality from subjoinnd causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age. 1 Puerperal Fever.	2 Whooping Cough.	3 Diarrhœa and Dysentery.	4 Phthisis.	5 Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	6 Heart Disease.	7 All other Diseases.	8 Total
Kempston Urban District	53	21	5	1	4	11	11	Under 5	....	4	3	....	8	....	10	25
								5 upwds.	4			4	3	4	16	28

B.

Table of Population, Births and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the Year 1897, *in the Kempston Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages and Localities.*

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; Public Institutions being shown as separate localities. (a)	Population at all ages. Last Census. (b)	Estimated to middle of 1897. (c)	Registered Births. (d)	Aged under 5 or over 5. (e)	New Cases of Sickness in each Locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health. Fevers. 1 Scarlatina	2 Diphtheria	3 Enteric or Typhoid	4 Puerperal	5 Erysipelas	Number of such cases removed from their homes in the several localities for treatment in Isolation Hospital. Fevers. Enteric or Typhoid
Kempston Urban District.....		4000	132	under 5	3	....	....	....	....	.....
				5 upwards	1	1	2	2	3	1

State here whether "Notification of Infectious Diseases" is compulsory in the District.—Yes. Since when?—Since District was formed. Besides the above-mentioned Diseases, insert in the columns with blank headings the names of any that are notifiable in the District, and fill the columns accordingly. State here the name of the Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District. Mark (H) the locality in which such Hospital is situated; and if not within the District, state where it is situated.—No Isolation Hospital.

KEMPSTON

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE YEAR

1897.

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